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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4790
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000752

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA. NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR. JOINT STAFF FOR LTGEN SELVA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/07/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [IS](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAELI BORDER GUARD KILLS PALESTINIAN AT IBRAHIMI MOSQUE IN HEBRON

REF: 08 JERUSALEM 1605

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. An Israeli border policeman shot and killed a mentally disabled Palestinian at the entrance of Ibrahimim mosque in Hebron late May 6. According to the International Committee for the Red Cross, the Palestinian was unarmed and had passed the security checkpoint. Palestinian security sources disputed Israeli press reports that the Palestinian attempted to take a policeman's weapon, claiming he did not pose a security threat. PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad complained about this incident in a conversation with the Consul General on May 6. End summary.

ICRC Calls Shooting a "Terrible Mistake"

¶2. (C) Head of the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) Hebron office Matteo Benatti told Poloff on May 7 that an Israeli border policeman shot approximately 20 year old Palestinian Hamam Naser al-Adin at the entrance of Ibrahimim Mosque in the H2 area of Hebron on the evening of May 6. Calling the incident a "terrible mistake," Benatti said that the Palestinian, who was mentally disabled, was unarmed and had passed through the metal security gate and metal detectors outside the entrance of the building when he was shot. Al-Adin's parents, Benatti said, approached ICRC early May 7 to request assistance in retrieving their son's body from an autopsy center near Tel Aviv, in order to bury him in accordance with Muslim tradition. Benatti said the Israeli District Coordination Liaison (DCL) told him on May 7 that Israeli security forces are investigating the incident, would not say if it is being treated as a terrorist attack, and could not guarantee that the body would be returned to the family that day.

Conflicting Reports on Incident

¶3. (C) Palestinian security sources told PolSpec on May 7 that al-Adin was carrying a Koran in a bag, which the Israeli border police described as a "suspicious object." Israeli press reports on May 7 claimed al-Adin attempted to take the weapon of a border policeman, a story that Palestinian security sources dispute based on eyewitness accounts, saying al-Adin was shot when he argued with a border policeman at the entrance of the mosque, and did not pose a security threat. The sources confirmed that al-Adin was mentally disabled, receiving treatment a mental hospital in Bethlehem, and said he attended daily evening prayers at Ibrahimim mosque.

Fayyad Expresses Concern

¶4. (C) PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad called the Consul General late on May 6 to complain about the incident. He said that information available to the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF) indicated that al-Adin posed no threat to the Israeli soldiers. He expressed concern that this incident could trigger unrest in Hebron and the southern West Bank, which is already tense after recent violence between Palestinians and settlers/IDF soldiers. He said the tragic incident in Hebron reflects loose IDF rules of engagement and an attitude of "shoot first and ask questions later." He said he has discussed this general problem with senior IDF and MOD officials on many occasions without any apparent impact. He urged the USG to raise the issue in its dialogue with the GOI.

WALLES